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Meeting the Challenge IV

the Government of Alberta's Three-Year Plan for Education

1997/1998 - 1999/2000

Alberta
EDUCATION

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Education

Business Plan 1997-1998 to 1999-2000

Accountability Statement

This Business Plan for the three years commencing April 1, 1997 was prepared under my direction in accordance with the Government Accountability Act and the government's accounting policies. All of the government's policy decisions as at January 20, 1997 with material economic or fiscal implications of which I am aware have been considered in preparing the Business Plan.

The Ministry's priorities outlined in the Business Plan were developed in the context of the government's business and fiscal plans. I am committed to achieving the planned results laid out in this Business Plan.

Gary G. Mar, Q.C.
Minister of Education
January 24, 1997

For more information on *the Government of Alberta's three-year plan for education 1997/1998 - 1999/2000*, contact:

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The three-year plan for education in Alberta is available on the Internet at Alberta Education's home page (http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca).

Introduction

The three-year plan for the education system supports the government's commitment to high standards for students, excellent schools, increased accountability, and greater community involvement in education. This plan advances our province's commitment to the three core businesses of people, prosperity and preservation. By working in partnerships with Albertans, Alberta Education will fulfill the provincial mandate: to ensure that all students have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing members of society.

Mission

"The Best Education For All Alberta Students."

Vision for Education

- Ensure students come first
- Focus resources on students
- Ensure excellence and affordability
- Account to Albertans
- Ensure quality programs and high standards for all students
- Support teachers' vital role
- Meet the needs of students in a rapidly changing world
- Involve all Albertans in education
- Help students be the best they can be
- Provide opportunities for choice

Core Business of Alberta Education

Alberta Education carries out the provincial government's constitutional responsibility for education under the direction of the Minister. The department has four core functions: to set and communicate high standards, focusing on what students need to learn; to assess and report to government and the public on student achievement and the performance and cost of the education system; to provide funding to school authorities on a fair and equitable basis and control the cost of education; and to develop and implement legislation, policies and long-range plans for the education system.

Key Areas for Improving Alberta's Education System

Information from education performance measures, three-year plan implementation, school board education plans and other sources indicate that there are areas that need improvement in the education system. Four key areas for continuous improvement have been identified and are addressed in this three-year plan for the education system. These also will be addressed in school authority three-year plans for 1997/98 to 1999/2000.

- **Increasing High School Completion Rates -** the Ministry will work with all Albertans to review curriculum; improve career education; increase student awareness of the importance of staying in school, and support alternatives to traditional schooling.

- **Improving Secondary Student Achievement in Mathematics -** the Ministry will work with school authorities to identify ways to improve mathematics achievement of secondary students; and increase emphasis on problem solving in curriculum, instructional materials and student evaluation.
- **Improving Student Access to Information Technology -** the Ministry will provide matching funds to put more computers in classrooms; establish requirements for technology in school authority three-year plans; develop curriculum standards for technology skills, and encourage the enhancement of teachers' abilities to use technology in instruction.
- **Improving Coordination of Services for Children -** the Ministry will work with other departments and agencies to support the re-design of the delivery of children's services across the province; work with school authorities to improve services for students with special needs; support school health research initiatives, with Alberta Health, to identify improved ways of meeting students' health and related service needs, and work with other government departments on case review and service plans to improve services for students with severe special needs.

Education System Goals, Results and Selected Strategies

Goals	Education System Results	Selected Department Strategies
Goal 1: Education is focused on what students need to learn and students achieve high standards.	• Alberta's learning standards meet the expectations of Albertans. • Students acquire the education they need to prepare them for work, further studies and for citizenship. • School jurisdictions and schools are effective in providing all students with opportunities for success. • Students achieve provincial and national learning standards. • School authorities use performance measure results to improve student learning.	1.1 Continue to ensure and communicate clear learning outcomes and high standards for education. 1.2 Increase the emphasis on problem solving in curriculum, instructional materials and assessment. 1.3 Work with school authorities to establish a list of key program delivery factors that could be used by schools to improve mathematics achievement of secondary school students. 1.4 Provide classroom assessment materials to enhance teachers' understanding of provincial standards. 1.5 Provide information to parents on what students are expected to learn and to schools on what each student has achieved in relation to provincial standards. 1.6 Work with Advanced Education and Career Development to provide information to learners/students, parents, and others on career development, the labour market, learning opportunities and the workplace. 1.7 Work with Advanced Education and Career Development to ease transitions for youth among school, work and adult learning by recognizing prior learning achieved in and outside the classroom. 1.8 Review the K-12 curriculum (especially Health, Personal Life Skills and CALM 20) to identify knowledge and skills related to business awareness, employability skills and entrepreneurship.

Goals	Education System Results	Selected Department Strategies
Goal 2: Parents and the community have the opportunity to be involved in the governance and delivery of a restructured education system.	• Parents and students can choose schools and programs within the public education system. • Parents, business and the community have meaningful roles in education. • All schools are safe and caring.	2.9 Assist school authorities to inform parents and the community, including business, of ways to be involved in schools and provide input to the education system. 2.10 Continue to implement and monitor the effectiveness of charter schools. 2.11 Work with students and other partners to identify ways to improve student conduct and school climate. 2.12 With Advanced Education and Career Development, work with employers and educators to create more opportunities for youth to develop competencies by integrating classroom and workplace learning.
Goal 3: Students have access to the support services they require.	• Services for children are coordinated at the provincial and local levels.	3.13 Provide guidelines to assist school authorities to develop local coordination of service agreements for improving services for students with special needs. 3.14 Support school health research initiatives to identify improved ways of meeting students' health and related service needs. 3.15 Work with Alberta Family and Social Services, Alberta Health, and other government departments on case review and service plans to improve services for students with severe special needs. 3.16 Work with other departments and agencies to improve service standards and funding mechanisms in support of the Redesign of Children's Services in Alberta.
Goal 4: Teaching in Alberta consistently is of high quality.	• Teacher preparation and professional growth focus on the competencies needed to help students learn. • Teachers know the Alberta curriculum and have the skills and knowledge needed to provide students with the best possible opportunity to learn. • Teachers evaluate student needs and progress, and use the results to improve student learning. • Teachers help students achieve provincial learning expectations and high standards.	4.17 Implement updated teacher preparation, certification and evaluation requirements. 4.18 Communicate competencies for beginning and experienced teachers. 4.19 Work with partners to develop ways to monitor and report on the effectiveness of updated teacher preparation, certification, professional development and evaluation requirements. 4.20 Identify and communicate "best practices" for supervising and monitoring beginning teachers. 4.21 Identify and communicate "best practices" for teacher evaluation and professional development.

Goals	Education System Results	Selected Department Strategies
Goal 5: Information technology is integrated into education to enhance student learning, and increase efficiency and flexibility of delivery.	• Students have information technology skills needed for K-12 learning, work and post-secondary studies. • Information technology expands choice and flexibility in what, when, where and how students learn. • Teachers are able to integrate information technology into instruction and the management of student learning.	5.22 Develop curriculum standards for technology skills to be achieved by students. 5.23 Work with Advanced Education and Career Development to coordinate strategies between schools and the post-secondary system for integration of technologies into teaching and learning. 5.24 Work with school authorities and institutions providing teacher preparation to improve teachers' ability to support and direct student learning in a technology-facilitated learning environment. 5.25 Provide matching funding for modern computers in the classroom.
Goal 6: The education funding system is fair, equitable and affordable.	• Albertans pay comparable education taxes on properties of equal value. • All school boards and schools are equitably funded. • The province, school authorities and schools are efficient in their use of education funding	6.26 Continue to increase the proportion of funding used for instruction. 6.27 Complete the phase in of uniform property tax rates for education. 6.28 Assess and adjust the Funding Framework to maintain equitable funding to school boards.
Goal 7: The education system is open and accountable for achievement of results and use of resources.	• Albertans have timely and meaningful information about student achievement and cost of education at the provincial, school authority and school levels.	7.29 Report regularly to the public on student learning and achievement, costs, and other results of Alberta's education system, and develop actions to improve education. 7.30 Complete the phase in of school authority and school three-year education plans and results reports. 7.31 Continue to assess school authority education plans and results reports, provide feedback, and use results to improve education.
Goal 8: Alberta Education is managed effectively and efficiently to achieve government goals.	• Department service is of high quality, affordable and focused on the needs of our partners. • The department is reduced and its work is guided by government's vision, mission and goals for education and the department's mandate. • Staff productivity plans are linked to government's goals for education and are focused on the department's core responsibilities and legislated functions.	8.32 Continue to streamline business processes and support innovations that improve the quality of department services and operations. 8.33 Continue to simplify and reduce regulatory requirements in the implementation of Alberta Education's Regulatory Reform Action Plan, and provide it to the public. 8.34 Better align the department's structure and resources to implement education plan goals. 8.35 Use technology to provide more effective and efficient department operations and services. 8.36 Address the recommendations of the external assessment of the department's performance.

Total Education Spending, 1997/1998 to 1999/2000

About $3 billion is spent annually to provide high quality programs for over 560,000 students from Early Childhood Services (ECS) to Grade 12. The Funding Framework ensures funds are used effectively and efficiently to provide school programs, facilities and transportation for students and to meet government spending targets. This meets Albertans' need for quality education at an affordable cost. Funds are focused on instruction to enable Alberta's young people to achieve high standards and to prepare for work, further study and citizenship.

Education Spending, 1997/98 to 1999/2000 (in millions of dollars)

Fiscal Year	1992/93 Actuals	1996/97 Forecast	1997/98 Budget	1998/99 Target	1999/2000 Target
Public & Separate School Board funding, including ECS*	2,893	2,782	2,875	2,931	2,951
Private Schools and Private ECS	42	51	56	57	58
Department Operations	57	47	44	39	39
LRDC Revolving Fund	16	18	17	17	17
Total Spending on Education	3,008	2,898	2,992	3,044	3,065
Less - Opted-out School Boards and Lottery Funds	(130)	(167)	(170)	(171)	(174)
Total Ministry Spending	2,878	2,731	2,822	2,873	2,891

* Includes opted-out school boards, contributions to the Teachers' Retirement Fund, the Learning Resources Distributing Centre (LRDC) and Material Resource Centre (MRC) subsidies and reinvestment in education, including lottery funds.

Reinvestment Initiatives

Overall, by 1999/2000 funding for school boards will increase by $169 million or 6.1% from the 1996/97 forecast. Spending highlights include:

- **Enrolment Growth** - A total of about $100 million will be added to support increasing enrolment over the period of the plan.
- **Regular Instruction** - An additional $15 million annually will be provided to school boards by increasing the per student instructional grant from $3,686 to $3,716 effective April 1, 1998.
- **Technology Upgrading for Schools** - The $40 million for 1997/98 and 1998/99 to expand education technology in schools will be increased by $20 million by extending the program through 1999/2000. As well, a one-time contribution of $5 million over two years is being provided from the Lottery Fund. To qualify for funding, school boards must spend a matching amount on approved technology integration projects, doubling the impact of this initiative.
- **Capital Funding** - To support construction and renewal of school buildings, $122 million is allocated for 1997/98 and increases by $18 million to $140 million each year beginning in 1998/99.

- **Students with Severe Disabilities** - To recognize an increased number of ECS to Grade 12 students identified with severe disabilities, the 1996/97 budget was increased $17.9 million through reallocations and supplementary funding. An additional $8.9 million will be added each year starting in 1997/98, bringing annual spending to about $77 million.

- **Equity Funding** - Beginning in 1998/99, an increase of $8 million annually will recognize differential costs in rural school jurisdictions, such as transportation, operations and maintenance of schools, and sparsity and distance.

Key Performance Measures for Education Accountability

Performance measures for the education system are used to assess and report annually on the quality of education in Alberta and to identify areas for improvement. Some of these performance measures also are used by school authorities and schools to assess and report on their results and to identify improvement areas.

- Percentage of students in grades 3, 6 and 9 who met or exceeded the acceptable standard on provincial achievement tests.

Subject	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	Standard
Grade 3							
Language Arts			76%		81%	86%	85%
Mathematics				87%	89%	91%	85%
Grade 6							
Language Arts		70%			80%	84%	85%
Mathematics	73%				81%	85%	85%
Science				85%	82%	86%	85%
Social Studies			76%		79%	78%	85%
Grade 9							
Language Arts				81%	82%	88%	85%
Mathematics		61%			66%	69%	85%
Science			73%		76%	81%	85%
Social Studies	75%				75%	79%	85%

Note: Achievement standards are set by members of the public and educators in relation to expected learning outcomes in the prescribed curriculum.

- Percentage of students writing grade 12 examinations who met or exceeded the acceptable standard.

Subject	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	Standard
English 30	89%	88%	87%	87%	91%	85%
English 33	87%	86%	85%	86%	86%	85%
Social Studies 30	81%	80%	84%	84%	84%	85%
Mathematics 30	73%	75%	75%	74%	74%	85%
Mathematics 33	—	—	—	—	79%	85%
Biology 30	76%	82%	81%	81%	77%	85%
Chemistry 30	83%	82%	80%	84%	82%	85%
Physics 30	81%	82%	85%	84%	80%	85%
Science 30	—	—	—	—	79%	85%

Note: January, June and August results are included for each school year. The acceptable standard is a mark of 50% or higher and the standard of excellence is a mark of 80% or higher.

- Percentage of students who receive a high school diploma or certificate, or enter post-secondary studies within 6 years of entering grade 9.

1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	Target 1999/2000
68%	69%	70%	69%	69%	75%

- Percentage of parents and high school students satisfied overall with the quality of education, and percentage of parents of children with severe special needs satisfied with services for their child.

	1995	1996	Target 1999
Parents' overall satisfaction with child's education	88%	88%	90%
Satisfaction of students with the quality of their education	94%	95%	95%
Satisfaction of parents of children with severe special needs	84%	75%	80%

Note: Parents of ECS to Grade 12 students were surveyed.

- Percentage of parents and high school students satisfied with various important aspects of teaching/ school.

	1995 Students	1996 Parents	1996 Students	Target 1999
Teachers use a variety of methods to help students learn	82%	82%	88%	90%
Teachers help students achieve learning expectations*		—		—
Teachers help students achieve high standards*		—		—
Teachers clearly communicate learning expectations for students		80%		90%

* Information to be collected and reported in 1997

- Percentage of parents and high school students satisfied that school improves students' computer skills and satisfied with student access to technology in school.

	1995 Students	1996 Parents*	1996 Students	Target 1999
School improves students' computer skills	62%	—	65%	80%
Student access to technology in school*	—	—	—	—

* Information to be collected and reported in 1998

- Percentage of parents, high school students and the public satisfied that high school graduates have the knowledge and skills to get a job and are prepared for post-secondary studies.

	1996 Skills to get a job	1995 Prepared for Post-secondary	1996 Prepared for Post-secondary	Target 1999 Skills to get a job	Target 1999 Prepared for Post-secondary
Parents	47%	65%	70%	55%	75%
High school students	83%	87%	91%	90%	90%
Public	38%	60%	68%	45%	75%

- Percentage of parents satisfied with the information from their school on their child's educational progress and achievement.

	1995	1996	Target 1999
Satisfied with access to information	90%	87%	90%
Satisfied with the information itself	88%	86%	90%

- Percentage of parents and the public satisfied with value received from public funds spent on education.

	1995	1996	Target 1999
Parents	73%	78%	80%
Public	51%	52%	55%

- Percentage of school board spending on instruction and on system governance and administration based on total school board spending.

	1993/94	1994/95	Target 1999/2000
Instruction in schools	66.2%	64.9%	70.4% or more
Board governance and system administration	5.5%	6.0%	5.0% or less
Other	28.3%	29.1%	24.6%

Note: Other includes transportation, operations and maintenance, debt servicing and external services.

- Differences in average annual provincial equalized residential property tax rate for education (Alberta School Foundation Fund - Basic Levy).

	1994	1995	1996	1997	Target 1999
Highest mill rate	11.4	10.2	8.5		
Lowest mill rate	2.2	2.8	3.1		
Average mill rate	7.5	7.3	7.1	7.02	At or below 7.02

- Range in per student expenditure by school jurisdictions.

	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96(E)
Lowest	$3,663	$4,172	$4,596	$5,019
Highest	$22,582	$22,040	$13,594	$12,019
Average	$5,906	$5,838	$5,606	$5,484

- Cost of department operations per public school student.

1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97(E)	Target 1999/2000
$116	$102	$99	$99	$94	$77

Education
Ministry Consolidated Income Statement
(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 1992-93 Actual	Comparable 1993-94 Actual	Comparable 1994-95 Actual	Comparable 1995-96 Actual	Comparable 1996-97 Forecast	1997-98 Estimates	1998-99 Target	1999-2000 Target
REVENUE								
Department	5,168	8,667	5,849	9,280	4,630	3,007	2,796	2,796
Education Revolving Fund	25,419	24,008	22,869	21,777	23,805	22,157	22,545	22,545
Alberta School Foundation Fund	1,114,633	1,167,883	1,200,993	1,201,397	1,166,601	1,170,454	1,110,396	1,085,251
Consolidation Adjustments	(8,902)	(4,671)	(4,346)	1,979	(13,541)	(5,943)	(5,975)	(5,975
Consolidated Revenue	1,136,318	1,195,887	1,225,365	1,234,433	1,181,495	1,189,675	1,129,762	1,104,617
EXPENSE								
Program								
Voted								
Department	1,746,955	1,783,042	1,540,030	1,491,666	1,548,872	1,635,637	1,747,571	1,790,810
Statutory								
Education Revolving Fund	25,300	24,589	22,771	22,331	23,655	22,177	22,545	22,545
Alberta School Foundation Fund	1,114,696	1,167,591	1,189,347	1,199,123	1,164,000	1,170,450	1,109,146	1,084,001
Consolidation Adjustments	(8,902)	(4,671)	(4,346)	(5,712)	(5,850)	(5,943)	(5,975)	(5,975
Consolidated Expense	2,878,049	2,970,551	2,747,802	2,707,408	2,730,677	2,822,321	2,873,287	2,891,381
GAIN (LOSS) ON DISPOSAL OF CAPITAL ASSET	-	(3)	(4)	(44)	-	-	-	-
NET REVENUE (EXPENSE)	(1,741,731)	(1,774,667)	(1,522,441)	(1,473,019)	(1,549,182)	(1,632,646)	(1,743,525)	(1,786,764

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